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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

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Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum**

II. Replies received from States

Algeria

[Original: French]
[6 July 2004]

1. Algeria fully supports the objectives and activities contemplated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/70 of 8 December 2003. In that connection, Algeria has spared no effort in translating into action the aims of the resolution, notably through diplomatic efforts in the areas described below.

Political and security partnership

2. Algeria has always believed that security in the Mediterranean region and security in Europe are inseparable and require a comprehensive and balanced approach. That approach needs to take into account the legitimate interests of all parties in the Euro-Mediterranean area, whose main objective is to bring peace and security for all and to build shared prosperity in the interests of all the peoples of the region.

3. This has been the thinking behind Algeria's diplomatic activities in regional forums such as the Barcelona process, the Mediterranean Forum, the Five Plus Five framework and the partnership with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with an emphasis on the common interest in consolidating peace

* A/59/150.
** The information contained herein was received after submission of the main report.

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and security in the Euro-Mediterranean area and in cooperating through permanent and constructive dialogue to build a genuine partnership.

4. In considering all the concerns of the Mediterranean region, the Barcelona process has laid the foundation for a new relationship between the two sides of the Mediterranean, one based on partnership and common interest. The various conferences held as part of the Barcelona process provided a strong political stimulus to the Euro-Mediterranean relationship by giving it a comprehensive, balanced and multidimensional approach based on the necessary balance between the three parts of the Barcelona Declaration (political and security partnership, economic and financial partnership and partnership in social, cultural and human affairs).

5. Joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Mediterranean Dialogue was also a strategic choice for Algeria, reflecting the priority it attaches to strengthening cooperation within the Mediterranean region to prevent conflict and bring peace and stability.

6. This dialogue with NATO is all the more valuable to a region as sensitive as the Mediterranean, because it addresses an important dimension of cooperation under the Barcelona process: security and confidence-building measures which, unfortunately, have been prevented from developing to any significant degree by the Middle East conflict.

7. Algeria welcomes the adoption by the NATO summit held in Prague of a paper entitled "Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue, including an inventory of possible areas of cooperation", as it provides new opportunities for cooperation between NATO and the countries of the Mediterranean in political, strategic and civil matters.

8. Algeria has also made active diplomatic efforts within the Five Plus Five framework and the Mediterranean Forum, which provide opportunities for useful and relevant regional discussions on a permanent basis. Because they are informal and flexible, these cooperation mechanisms serve as a think tank to drive forward the pursuit of stability and security in the region by various means, including new confidence-building measures to strengthen dialogue and consultation between the member countries.

Economic and financial partnership

9. Economic and financial cooperation is an important building block of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership: the aims are to speed up the economic development of the countries of the southern Mediterranean so as to narrow the gap between them and the advanced countries of the North and to encourage South-South integration to establish an area of peace, security and stability in the Mediterranean.

10. On 22 April 2002, in Madrid, Algeria and the European Union signed an association agreement that provides an updated and forward-looking framework for cooperation and demonstrates the commitment and willingness of the two parties to establish strong and lasting cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

11. Against that background, Algeria is encouraging all initiatives to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, particularly those aimed at developing the western

Mediterranean, which has more certain prospects for integration and interaction. In that connection, Algeria is seeking economic and financial support from the European Union to encourage advanced cooperation between the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union and the European States of the northern Mediterranean.

12. Algeria is convinced that the economic and financial partnership launched by the Barcelona process plays an important role in narrowing the development gap between the northern and southern Mediterranean regions and urges its European partners to give the Barcelona process the financial resources it needs to match the objectives it has set for itself, first and foremost by strengthening the financing provisions of the MEDA II programme, the principal financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the period 2000-2006. It also advocates the promotion of foreign direct investment and its equitable distribution among the countries of the region.

13. Algeria also welcomes the establishment of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership, which is a first step in reviving economic growth, but it remains convinced that the plan to set up a Euro-Mediterranean Investment Bank is the best way to meet the huge financing needs generated by the task of ensuring that the economies of the countries of the southern Mediterranean develop and catch up.

14. Algeria also calls for a review of the debt issue with a view to debt cancellation and relief, including for middle-income countries, and the possibility of debt-equity swaps. The aim is to establish new economic relations and promote a genuine and lasting partnership for development as the background for creating an area of shared prosperity in the Mediterranean.

Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs

15. With respect to social, cultural and human affairs, Algeria considers that the human dimension is at the heart of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and its inclusion in the Barcelona process reflects the aspiration of the peoples of the region to live together in a climate of peace and community and their deep desire to act to further that ideal by establishing a calm and fruitful dialogue founded on the richness of their cultural diversity and the greatness of their shared heritage.

16. Algeria has a substantial and settled community in Europe and justifiably believes that genuine Euro-Mediterranean partnership cannot be confined to a free-trade area for goods and services but excluding the movement of people. In that connection, Algeria is working to overcome the lack of understanding between the two sides of the Mediterranean regarding the movement of people and to promote a fruitful and constructive dialogue on that matter.

17. Algeria accordingly welcomes the progress that has led to the establishment of the Justice and Home Affairs component of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation to promote assistance in judicial matters, in migration and in combating undesirable transnational phenomena. It has contributed substantially to that cooperation and is working with determination to implement it on the ground.

Strengthening international and regional peace and security

18. Algeria believes that the establishment of confidence-building measures to strengthen peace and security in the Mediterranean region and throughout the world

must be based on just and lasting solutions to conflicts, respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the peaceful settlement of disputes and concrete, effective disarmament measures, including the accession of all States of the region to the multilateral agreements banning nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction (such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention) and the submission of all their nuclear installations to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

19. Transparency in armaments is another valuable tool for creating a climate of peace and confidence in the Mediterranean region. It should also be aimed at preventing the destabilizing accumulation of weapons of all types. Algeria, while recognizing the importance of these objectives, considers that national sovereignty and the right of States to preserve their security and to enjoy undiminished security are also important. Measures to enhance transparency must be consensual, non-discriminatory and complete.

20. At a time when the eastern part of the Euro-Mediterranean region is facing violence and war, littoral States must demonstrate shared political will to take up common challenges in a spirit of solidarity through respect for the principles enshrined in international law, especially those of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the non-use of force or the threat of force and respect for sovereignty. This would help to strengthen democracy, consolidate the rule of law and eliminate new types of threats to peace and security, in particular the scourge of terrorism and transnational organized crime.

21. Algeria remains committed to the Middle East peace process and to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The advent of this peace can only strengthen security and stability in the Mediterranean, to the benefit of all the peoples of the region.

22. Algeria condemns the blocking of the peace process through the policy of violence practised by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership and remains convinced that the Palestinian issue can be settled only by implementing the Arab peace plan adopted by the Beirut Arab Summit in March 2002 and accepted unanimously by the international community as an instrument for peace and for regional concord and by establishing a Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Combating international terrorism and organized crime

23. Another area considered a priority for all the partners involved in the Mediterranean forums is combating terrorism, which has become a worldwide danger since the tragic events of 11 September and thus a threat to international peace and security.

24. Algeria remains in the forefront of the worldwide effort to combat this threat and has worked at the regional and international levels to draw up the major international counter-terrorism conventions. Algeria spent more than a decade fighting this transnational scourge alone, and has therefore contributed to the stability of the Mediterranean region.

25. Algeria is proud to have played a part in making the prevention and repression of terrorism part of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and is continuing to fulfil its

role and contribute its experience to the international community's efforts to eliminate this transnational scourge completely.

26. Algeria is a major participant in the implementation of the plans of action to counter transnational terrorism adopted by NATO, OSCE and the Mediterranean Forum; they are a considerable step forward in the process of eradicating that worldwide threat finally and completely.

27. The countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership have also focused on transnational organized crime, as it is one of the dangers that threatens the harmonious development of the countries of the South. Algeria has ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and cooperates with the Conference of Ministers of Western Mediterranean Countries to improve methods of preventing and fighting this scourge and countering international criminal networks.

28. Security and stability in the Mediterranean also depend on waging a constant battle against the trade in small arms and light weapons, which worsens conflicts and encourages terrorism and transnational crime. Algeria is aware of this danger, and has been making a permanent contribution to the international community's efforts to combat the phenomenon, thus consolidating the aims of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.